Ontario’s Meat Inspection Program

Meat Inspection Program
Food Inspection Branch
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Outline

- Purpose of Inspection
- Regulatory Authority
- Program Overview
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- Inspection Duties
- Code of Professionalism
- Personal Safety While Inspecting
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Purpose of Inspection

- Provide safe meat products for Ontarians
- Determine compliance with the *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001* and regulations
- Minimize food safety risks
Regulatory Authority

- The *Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001*

- Ontario Regulations
  - 31/05 Meat Regulation
  - 222/05 General
  - 223/05 Fees
  - 266/09 Livestock And Poultry Carcasses - Grades And Sales
Ministry Staff

- Director, Food Inspection Branch
- General Manager, Meat Inspection Program
- 2 Regional Managers (East and West/North)
- 13 Area Managers
- 137 Meat Inspectors (meat hygiene officers; further processing inspectors and area coordinators)

- Supported by:
  - Meat Inspection Program Operations Unit
  - Veterinary Inspection and Audit Unit
  - Food Safety Science Unit
Program Overview
Program Overview

- 144 provincially licensed slaughter plants

- A slaughter plant may...
  - slaughter animals for food
  - dress carcasses
  - process, handle, store, package, label, sell and distribute carcasses, parts of carcasses and other meat products
  - receive, skin, cut, wrap, freeze farm slaughtered carcasses and grind meat derived from farm slaughtered carcasses and process ham, bacon and sausage from farm slaughtered carcasses that are derived from pigs
  - perform any other activity carried on in respect to operating the plant that is regulated (e.g. further processing)
Program Overview

- 374 provincially licensed freestanding meat plants
- Licensing eligibility criteria is based on the activity carried out and the distribution of the meat products
- Determined according to “Do you Operate a Free Standing Meat Plant” flow chart on slide 9
**Free Standing Meat Plants (FSMPs)**

**Do You Operate a Free Standing Meat Plant?**

- **Are you federally registered?**
  - Yes → Federal Inspection (CFIA) and not subject to the Ontario Meat Regulation
  - No

- **Do you slaughter?**
  - Yes → Abattoir subject to Ontario Meat Regulation: not a Free Standing Meat Plant
  - No

- **Do you conduct any "Category 2 activities"?**
  - Yes → Free Standing Meat Plant; OMAFRA Inspection and subject to Ontario Meat Regulation
  - No

- **Do you conduct any “Category 1 activities”?**
  - Yes → Do you sell only to consumers?
    - Yes → Public Health Unit Inspection and subject to Food Premises Regulation under the *Health Promotion and Protection Act*; not a Free Standing Meat Plant
    - No → Free Standing Meat Plant; OMAFRA Inspection and subject to Ontario Meat Regulation
  - No → Not subject to Ontario Meat Regulation
Inspection Frequency

- Slaughter Plants
  - Inspector is present during all slaughter activity

- Freestanding Meat Plants
  - Based on risk
  - Frequency of inspection can range from inspection every week (high risk) to once every six weeks (low risk)
  - Each Freestanding Meat Plants are assessed according to:
    - Processes and types of products (raw vs. ready to eat)
    - Volume
    - Distribution (wholesale vs. retail)
    - Possible cross-contamination (plant layout)
    - Source of meat
    - Mitigating factors (such as food safety programs, manufacturing controls, compliance history, audit rating)
Inspection Duties

- Inspector is present during all slaughter activities in abattoirs
- All animals are inspected
  - Ante-mortem inspection
  - Post-mortem inspection
- Monitors processing procedures and operational practices / standards in meat plants
- Ensures humane treatment of animals
- Verifies records
- Collects samples for lab testing
- Monitors water quality and tracks compliance actions related to the prevention of water contamination, drug residues and regulations
- Monitors products for the presence of hazardous substances (such as environmental contaminants, antibiotics, pathogens)
- Follows-up on corrective action items identified in audits
Regulator’s Code of Practice

- Elements
  - Timeliness
  - Objectivity
  - Respect
  - Confidentiality
  - Honesty and Integrity
  - Knowledge and Competencies
  - Compliance and Risk

- Service Standards
- On initial contact with a client, an inspector will:
  - Introduce themselves and the ministry they represent
  - Identify the statutory authority
  - Provide general information regarding the inspection
  - Provide a contact number
Personal Safety While Inspecting

- Inspectors are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment
  - Safety Headgear
  - Hearing Protection
  - Safety Boots
  - Hand Protection
  - Hairnets
  - White uniforms
  - Biosecurity Kit and Respirators
Data Collection

- Plant Log Book
- Further Processing Inspection Worksheet
- Food Safety Decision Support System
  - Database that collects information critical for the program
Training Program

- Orientation — Covers human resources, health and safety, program specific information and training requirements

- Classroom training — Inspectors complete 12 days of classroom training covering theory and background for all the competencies to become a meat inspector

- Distance education (self-study) courses — The Food Handler Training course and the Meat Technology course

- Field placement — On-the-job training with a dedicated trainer during slaughter, using the field placement training as a guide

- Evaluation and certification — Trainees must pass classroom exams, a field placement evaluation, and successfully complete Food Handler Training and Meat Technology course
Audit Program

- Plants are to be ‘always audit ready’
- Snapshot of plant’s overall food safety performance
- Evaluates a plant’s compliance level
- Review the overall structure and operations of a meat plant
- Findings are assessed against the regulatory requirements to determine whether or not the plant is compliant
- Auditors are veterinary and food safety experts
- Audit rating is reflective of the types and number of deficiencies that are noted during the audit – Pass, Conditional Pass, Fail
Audit Follow-Up

• Ministry inspection staff:
  – Ensure that deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner AND any deficiencies that may have a critical or significant impact on food safety are controlled **immediately** and do not represent a risk to public health
  – Schedule a detailed corrective action plan meeting with the operator
  – Monitor the implementation of the corrective action plan
  – Work with operator and provide assistance and advice to deal with the corrective action plan and any food safety issues identified in the audit
Questions?

Thank you!